

****ATTENTION****

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Washington Department of Wildlife



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NORTHEAST WASHINGTON

MULE DEER HUNTING

Northeast Washington is known primarily for its whitetail deer hunting, but some good mule deer hunting in the mid to high elevations is also available. The area produces many prime adult bucks, but antler spread and length are probably less than comparably-aged animals in other states or possibly the Okanogan area of Washington. Check the current hunting rules pamphlet for season dates.

Mule deer hunting in this area has the advantage of being primarily on public lands, with plenty of camping areas and some very beautiful back-country. Hunter success is not very high, however, and the best—or at least the easiest-to-hunt—areas can be crowded. Hunting pressure is actually high in all areas early in the season, but as the season progresses, pressure drops rapidly. Snow cover provides better

visibility and tracking, however, and some bucks may begin to move to lower elevations if enough snow falls. The roadless areas provide some good bucks, but they are scattered and the hunter may have to work very hard in rugged country to find one, if at all.

Ferry County has the highest mule deer population, although production has not been as good as in the late '70s. Unit 100, which has about 30 bucks per 100 does, produces about 400 bucks in the harvest, about 60 percent of them yearlings. Unit 103, which has about 40 bucks per 100 does, produces about 150 bucks in the harvest, all which are adults since the unit is currently under a 3-point-antler restriction. Both units are in rugged country, but the larger unit 100 is more heavily roaded and generally more open. Unit 103 is designated a "quality" buck area, where only bucks

with three points or more can be taken, so hunting pressure and success is generally lower. Nearly all of the mid- to high-elevation areas in the county where mule deer are found are managed by the Colville National Forest and open to hunting; maps are available at the ranger stations in Republic and Kettle Falls, or at the forest supervisor's office at 695 South Main St., Colville, WA 99114. There are plenty of good roads and due to the relatively early season, snow is usually not a problem. An excellent trail system follows the Kettle Crest, the mountain range dividing units 100 and 103. Horses and backpacking are popular in these areas.

Lincoln County's unit 133 produces more than 600 bucks in the harvest, with about 80 percent yearlings. Hunting in this area is primarily on private land, however, so access is

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more complicated. For those who have established a place to hunt, success is relatively high (which explains why few bucks live to be trophy age!). Stevens and Pend Oreille Counties also have some pockets of mule deer populations, but they tend to be difficult to reach because of the rugged terrain. The high ridges and clear-cuts of units 111 and 113 are the best areas to scout.

The northern parts of 111 and 113 have good trail systems. These areas provide a high ratio of adult bucks, but few are taken because deep snows at the higher elevations limit hunter access. The high quality experience of mule deer hunting in this area, however, keeps some hunters coming back year after year.

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